

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 319  
By Armstrong

A RESOLUTION urging the Department of Human Services to articulate welfare rights and responsibilities to Families First applicants and customers.

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for services that assist Families First customers moving into the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Families First was promoted as a contractual relationship between the applicant or customer and the state, with customers promising to seek work and the state promising to provide the necessary services; and

WHEREAS, as Families First is now administered, Families First applicants and customers are hampered in their efforts to move into the workforce because they are often not fully aware of the mutual obligations imposed by Families First; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that the Department of Human Services fully explain to applicants and customers that the General Assembly authorized the provision of needed services including child care, transportation, education, and job training; and

WHEREAS, applicants and customers who do not know their rights are likely to lose their benefits unjustly after encountering difficulties accessing needed services; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

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CONCURRING, That we strongly urge and encourage the Department of Human Services to articulate welfare rights and responsibilities to Families First applicants and customers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services should be required to inform applicants and customers of time limits and exceptions to such time limits.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That it should be clarified that an applicant or customer has the right to bring a friend, clergy, advocate or other person to any interview with the case manager, and that such persons may assist the applicant or customer in the discussions regarding the content of the Personal Responsibility Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this information, including a description of the grievance/appeal process, should be provided before the Personal Responsibility Plan is drafted or signed and should be given to the applicant/customer both orally and in writing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House Health and Human Resources Committee and the Senate General Welfare Committee may hold legislative hearings in the fall of 1997 in Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville to facilitate the receiving of testimony from those directly affected by Families First, to assess the Department of Human Services' implementation of Families First.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That if testimony at the hearings indicates that the Department of Human Services is not following the intent of the State to promote the transition to self-sufficiency, that appropriate recommendations will be made to the 100th General Assembly in 1998.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.